

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. An audit-credit-interactive system for interconnecting to a vending machine, said
2 vending machine having a vending machine controller, said audit-credit-interactive system
3 being electrically connected to said vending machine controller comprising:
4
5 a microcontroller;
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7 a vending machine interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
8 data communicating with said vending machine controller;
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10 an interactive interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
11 interfacing said audit-credit-interactive system to a computing platform,
12 wherein said computing platform data communicates with said audit-credit-
13 interactive system for the purpose of monitoring and selectively controlling
14 said vending machine.
15
- 1 2. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vending
2 machine interface is interconnected to at least one of the following: said vending machine
3 controller multi-bus-drop interface (MDB), or said vending machine controller data
4 exchange interface (DEX).
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- 1 3. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing
2 platform is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a cashless
3 payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, a bill validator, a personal computer,
4 an online module, a communication module, or a microprocessor based system.
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1 4. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing
2 platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-interactive
3 system to determine the operational state of a peripheral device interconnected to said
4 vending machine controller.

1 5. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 4, wherein said peripheral
2 device is at least one of the following: said audit-credit-interactive system, an online
3 module, a card reader, a cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a
4 bill validator.

1 6. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said audit-
2 credit-interactive system is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a
3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

1 7. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing
2 platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-interactive
3 system to determine the message prompts to be displayed to a user.

1 8. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said interactive
2 interface is a communication port.

1 9. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said
2 communication port is at least one of the following: an RS232 port, an RS485 port, a
3 serial peripheral interface (SPI) port, or general purpose input output control line port.

1 10. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
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3 a communication interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
4 effectuating data communications to a plurality of remote locations.
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1 11. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 10, wherein said
2 communication interface is at least one of the following: a modem, a wireless modem, a
3 data link to a communication module, or a transceiver.
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1 12. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
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3 a network interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
4 effectuating network data communications.
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1 13. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 12, wherein said network
2 interface is at least one of the following: an ethernet interface, or a firewire interface.
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1 14. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
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3 a mimic MDB interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data
4 communicating with a plurality of peripheral devices, said plurality of
5 peripheral device being interconnected with said mimic MDB interface.
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1 15. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 14, wherein said plurality
2 peripheral devices include at least one of the following: a coin mechanism, a bill
3 validator, an online module, a communication module, or a card reader.
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5 16. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said audit-
credit-interactive system is retrofit to said vending machine.

1 17. An audit-credit-interactive system for interconnection with a vending machine, said
2 vending machine having a vending machine controller, said audit-credit-interactive system
3 being electrically connected to said vending machine controller comprising:

4
5 a microcontroller;

6
7 a vending machine interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
8 data communicating with said vending machine controller;

9
10 a mimic MDB interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data
11 communicating with a plurality of peripheral devices, said plurality of
12 peripheral device being interconnected with said mimic MDB interface.

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1 18. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said vending
2 machine interface is interconnected to at least one of the following: said vending machine
3 controller multi-bus-drop interface (MDB), or said vending machine controller data
4 exchange interface (DEX).

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1 19. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein a first
2 plurality of data is communicated between said vending machine controller and said
3 vending machine interface, and a second plurality of data if communicated between said
4 mimic MDB interface and at least one of said plurality of peripheral devices;

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6 wherein, said audit-credit-interactive system effectuates data communication between said
7 vending machine controller and at least one of said plurality of peripherals by way of data
8 processing said first plurality of data and said second plurality of data to provide a

9 common communication protocol between said vending machine controller and at least
10 one of said plurality of peripheral devices.

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1 20. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-
2 credit-interactive system is a data processing gateway between said vending machine
3 controller and said plurality of peripheral devices.

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1 21. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said plurality
2 of peripheral devices is at least one of the following: said audit-credit-interactive system,
3 an online module, a card reader, a cashless payment device, an audit device, a
4 communication module, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

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1 22. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-
2 credit-interactive system is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a
3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

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1 23. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:

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3 an interactive interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
4 interconnecting said audit-credit-interactive system to a computing
5 platform, wherein said computing platform data communicates with said
6 audit-credit-interactive system for the purpose of monitoring and
7 selectively controlling said vending machine.

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1 24. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 23, wherein said
2 computing platform is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a

3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, a bill validator, a personal
4 computer, an online module, a communication module, or a microprocessor based system.
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1 25. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 23, wherein said
2 computing platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-
3 interactive system to determine the operational state of a device interconnected to said
4 vending machine controller.
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1 26. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:
2
3 a communication interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
4 effectuating data communications to a plurality of remote locations.
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1 27. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 26, wherein said
2 communication interface is at least one of the following: a modem, a wireless modem, a
3 data link to a communication module, or a transceiver.
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1 28. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:
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3 a network interface interconnected with said microcontroller for
4 effectuating network data communications.
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1 29. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 28, wherein said network
2 interface is at least one of the following: an ethernet interface, or a firewire interface.
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1 30. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-
2 credit-interactive system is retrofit to said vending machine.